



Sleepover by 2Dglasses

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Summary: Eleven and Max become friends during the summer of 1985. After a day of fun together, they have a sleep over at the Hopper cabin. During the night, something happens that sparks a conversation about both of the girl's troubled pasts and they discover that they have more in common than they thought. *Written before Season 3 release*

Sleepover

Max and Eleven had gotten closer as the summer of '85 was beginning. Both were glad to have a chance to spend some time together and get to know each other. By this stage, Eleven had gotten over her initial dislike of the other girl once she actually saw how cool she was. And Max found Eleven's child-like outlook that lay underneath her badass powers adorable, but at the same time she was so intrigued by her perspective of the world.

On this particular day, Max had taken Eleven to the newly opened Starcourt Mall to show her the wonders of summer fashion. They both had a great time shopping and eating ice-cream. Just being teenagers together. They returned to the Hopper household and spent the evening listening to music and joking around, as much as Eleven could understand.

By the time night came around, Eleven asked Hopper if Max could stay over seeing as they were having such a fun time bonding and getting to know each other. Jim was just happy to see his girl smile that he couldn't say no.

As the girls became too tired to stay awake, they decided to eventually sleep, albeit at a respectable 4a.m. If Hopper only knew...

Eleven offered Max her bed, but the red head insisted she sleep just next to it on the floor. And like that, they were out like lights. Although, after only a few hours something caused Max's eyes to open. A noise came from above her and she sat up quickly when she noticed it was coming from Eleven.

"El? Are you..."

She stood next to her friend's bed and saw the girl shifting and breathing very shallow, panicked breaths.

"Shit."

She said to herself as she realized that Eleven was having a nightmare. She reached down to the other girl and gently took hold

of her shoulder. She instantly felt the heat radiating from Eleven and felt her damp shirt. She jumped back when the brunette suddenly opened her dark eyes and gasped.

"El, hey. It was just a dream."

Eleven felt the warm presence above her and blinked through slightly blurred vision. Her fast breaths came shallow and dry, but the face of her friend became clearer to her with each breath.

She sat up swiftly and leaned forward, resting her forehead in her hand.

"I-I'm... I'm sorry."

Max placed her soft hand on the other girl's back and rubbed the pad of her thumb along the damp fabric of her shirt.

"Don't be sorry. It was just a bad dream, okay?"

Eleven tried to steady her breaths and internally calm herself down, but the darkness in her mind hadn't fully faded.

"You shouldn't h-have to..."

The brunette couldn't finish her sentence before reaching up with her other hand and rubbing her eyes. She let out a heavy sigh and after a moment took one hand away from her face and with the other she held it up to her nose before looking down and seeing that familiar crimson shine.

"Shit, El..."

Eleven blinked heavily, her expression filled with annoyance at the fact that she bled more than worry.

"Does this happen a lot?"

She wiped away the rest of the blood with her sleeve before answering.

"Yes."

Max watched the other girl sit back and lean against the head board. She looked so worn out and Max immediately reached and took Eleven's hand in her own, sitting at the edge of the bed. She just watched her friend even out her breaths, but still saw the pained look on her face.

It seemed like a bad nightmare judging from how distressed Eleven was.

Her blue eyes trailed down Eleven's shaking form to her own hand gripping the brunette's. Then she saw it. The tattoo.

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Eleven had been a mystery to Max ever since the boys mentioned her and with how secretive they had been about her initially. As she met the girl and got to know her a little that intrigue only seemed to grow. Lucas had mentioned about Eleven's past and how she was raised in Hawkins Lab, about how when they found her she was rail thin, terrified and had a shaved head. Not to mention her powers. But that's all he knew. That's all anyone knew about her childhood.

"El?"

A moment passed.

"Yes?"

"Are you okay?"

Eleven still leaned her head back against the bed, but she wordlessly nodded. Max still gripped her hand.

"Do you maybe wanna talk about it?"

Eleven opened her eyes and looked down at where Max's thumb was rubbing her wrist. Right over the tattoo. She knew that Max knew. The red head saw the subtle movement of the other girl's brow and the slight frown form on her troubled face.

"Were you dreaming about that place? About..."

Should she?

"... about the lab?"

She committed, but the mere mention of that word caused Eleven to flinch. She shut her eyes and eventually slowly nodded. Max felt her heart swell so she scooted forward closer to El so that she was sitting cross legged almost in between the other girl's legs.

"I heard you calling for Papa. Was Hopper there too? In your dream. Did the bad men hurt him?"

Eleven gulped at Max's assumption and the red head felt the grip on her hand tighten slightly.

"Papa. N-Not Hopper."

Max was confused. The brunette slowly opened her dark, glassy eyes and looked at Max for a moment before looking down at the ink on her wrist.

"Papa... gave me this."

Max stared down at the ink again and felt the pieces fitting together in her head. A heavy feeling formed in her chest.

"He hurt you."

It wasn't a question. Max knew. Eleven also knew that even though Brenner was never the one to actually physically hurt her, he was always the reason behind it. So she nodded.

"Y-Yes."

At this stage Max wasn't sure if she should press Eleven any further especially since she was in such a vulnerable state, but she didn't know if the girl would ever be this open with her, or anyone for that matter, again.

"El, what happened to you?"

She held her breath as soon as the words left her mouth. The other

girl's silence instantly made her think she went too far. But just as Max was about to apologize, she felt Eleven take her other hand in hers. Her head was leaning forward and her eyes were tired and half-lidded, but her mouth opened ever so slightly as she contemplated. Then she decided.

"I... lived in a bad place. Alone..."

Max felt a lump form in her throat. Of course Eleven couldn't speak properly if she had nobody to practice speaking with.

"Only Papa."

"What was he like?"

The red head asked, doing her best to keep her tone as soft as possible.

"He was... If I was good, he wasn't so scary."

Those words sent shivers down Max's spine. Eleven spoke so quietly.

"Sometimes, he read to me and brought me things."

"Is he the one who taught you how to talk?"

The brunette nodded.

"Mhmm. But... I didn't like talking."

"Why not?"

Eleven shifted a little.

"I was too tired."

Max remembered when Hopper brought El back after she closed the gate. The girl was unconscious and wasn't able to do anything for days afterwards. She could only imagine what kind of experiments were going on back at the lab that had her so worn out all the time.

"El, why were you always tired? Was he making you use your powers?"

Once again, Eleven wordlessly nodded. She closed her eyes and tightened her grip on Max's hands slightly. Max returned the gesture.

"He made me... kill."

"What? That's..."

Eleven's eyebrows furrowed and she stared down at the blankets. She seemed to be in a daze.

"He wanted me to kill a cat, but I... couldn't. I said n-no."

Max could tell by the other girl's expression that this was a particularly difficult memory for her to recall.

"I disobeyed."

She said that word as if she was repeating it back.

"So, Papa... told the bad men to put me in the dark room."

Max felt her eyes well up at the sadness now lacing Eleven's voice and the fresh tears beginning to form in her dark eyes.

"I didn't like it in there. It was scary."

Her voice broke, but she continued despite this. She had to.

"I didn't want to stay there s-so I... I killed the bad men."

Max could only watch as Eleven's resolve disintegrated in front of her eyes. The girl she was always so in awe of and intimidated by was crumbling away to reveal the scared and fragile little girl that had spent her whole life being abused, something Max could definitely relate to.

"It was an accident, Max. I p-promise."

Eleven looked up at her friend, tears now freely falling down her face. Without a word, Max reached forward and pulled the crying girl into a tight embrace. Eleven was a little stiff at first, but the warmth of the arms around her caused her to melt into her friend's hold and

openly cry.

"It's okay, El. It's all over now. He can't make you do anything again."

It was heartbreaking. The body she held against her own trembled and Max was sure her heart had shattered at this stage.

"The bad men are gone. They can't hurt you."

She gently rocked El until she calmed down and slowly pulled away. The brunette wiped at her face until her tears stopped. She glanced up at Max and nervously smiled before looking down again, as if she was ashamed. Her fingers tangled together and she let out a sigh.

"I'm sorry."

Max laughed from disbelief. Resting her hand on Eleven's arm and keeping her tone light.

"What could you possibly be sorry for, huh?"

Eleven hesitated.

"I'm not the only one who hurts."

Max was about to ask what the other girl was talking about, but her answer came when Eleven reached up and lifted the fabric of the red head's short sleeve to reveal a yellowing bruise on her upper arm. It surprised her that the brunette had even noticed. Max took Eleven's hand and lowered it to her lap.

"This? Hey, this is nothing. I just- I fell off my bike last weekend. Don't worry about-"

"Max. Friends don't lie."

Eleven's quiet voice stopped Max mid-sentence. Her dark eyes were intensely focused on the red head's own blue orbs. She was right. How could Max expect Eleven to accept her lie when she had just revealed her most personal and painful memories.

"Look, my brother gets angry sometimes, okay? It's nothing. You were

tortured in a lab for your whole childhood. Don't even try to-

"Max."

The other girl's voice was much more firm this time. The intensity in her eyes remained, almost to the point where Max couldn't even meet her gaze. Eleven continued.

"Pain is pain. We are different, but... I understand."

The red head felt her eyes begin to sting.

"If the bad man hurts you again, come here."

Eleven reached to her bedside table and flicked on the night light, before scooting back next to her friend.

"It will never be like the dark room. That way we won't be scared."

Max let a tear escape her eye and she smiled at Eleven's display of warmth. Her heart was mended by her friend's reassuring words and she smiled.

"Thanks, El."

She reached forward and once again took the other girl in her arms. This time, Eleven didn't hesitate and returned the gesture immediately.

"I'm so glad we're friends."

Eleven suddenly had a flashback to Mike's basement when she asked 'What is friend?'

She smiled to herself and rested her chin on Max's shoulder.

"Me too."